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Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4888th meeting

Monday, 22 December 2003, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Tafrov	(Bulgaria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Rojas
	China	Mr. Cheng Jingye
	France	Mrs. D'Achon
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Sow
	Mexico	Mr. Pujalte
	Pakistan	Mr. Ahmad
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzún
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Howe-Jones
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Briefings by Chairmen of Security Council Committees and Working Groups

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03-66725 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefings by Chairmen of Security Council Committees and Working Groups

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. At this meeting we will hear briefings by the Chairmen of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 918 (1994) concerning Rwanda, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone and the Working Group on General Issues on Sanctions.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend invitations under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Pleuger, Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait; the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia; Mr. Fayssal Mekdad, on behalf of the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 918 (1994) concerning Rwanda; Mrs. Maria Angelica Arce de Jeannet, on behalf of the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone; and Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, Chairman of the Working Group on General Issues on Sanctions.

It is so decided.

I now give the floor to Mr. Gunter Pleuger, Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

Mr. Pleuger: I appreciate very much that the obituary comes first. This will be the last report on the work of the 661 Committee, which was terminated, according to resolution 1483 (2003), on 21 November 2003, after 13 years of a comprehensive sanctions regime.

As a subsidiary organ of the Security Council, the Committee had to execute the political decisions of the Council as manifested in the relevant Security Council resolutions. The mandate of the 661 Committee thus comprised two major elements: the implementation and supervision of the sanctions regime against Iraq and of the humanitarian programme, oil-for-food.

Germany chaired this Committee in two crucial stages of its history: first in 1995 and 1996, when the oil-for-food programme was originally designed in order to alleviate the negative repercussions of a comprehensive sanctions regime on large parts of the Iraqi population and economy; secondly, in 2003, when the focus of the Committee was substantially shifted from its usual business in the past, due to the war-related interruption of the programme in March, followed by the end of the former regime, the lifting of sanctions in May and the termination of the humanitarian oil-for-food programme on 21 November.

Confronted with the interruption of the programme in March, the Committee, upon request of the Security Council, negotiated the content of Council resolution 1472 (2003), which would allow humanitarian emergency deliveries out of the existing pipeline of approved contracts. This resolution was adopted on 28 March and, for the first time, after months of division in the Council, achieved consensus among Council members on an issue related to Iraq.

After the war and the adoption of resolution 1483 (2003) on 22 May, the Committee was tasked with supervising the transitional process leading to the termination of the humanitarian oil-for-food programme on 21 November and to the transfer of all responsibilities from the Office of the Iraq Programme (OIP) to the Coalition Provisional Authority. As chair of the 661 Committee, we have tried to ensure maximum transparency in this transitional process.

This required permanent coordination between all actors — OIP, Coalition Provisional Authority, United Nations agencies and the experts of the Committee — and regular updates to members of the Council. Regular informal meetings of the 661 Committee,

sometimes several times per week, several times including representatives of the Coalition Provisional Authority from Baghdad and always including the various United Nations agencies and OIP, were organized in order to achieve an optimal flow of information. We hope that this has contributed to the integrity of the transfer of responsibilities from OIP to the Coalition Provisional Authority and to the necessary continuity in the transitional period, thus avoiding the disruption of the delivery pipeline and a possible humanitarian emergency situation.

I should also mention that the 661 Committee, after adoption of resolution 1483 (2003), likewise fulfilled its additional new task pursuant to paragraphs 19 and 23 of that resolution. On 11 June, the Committee adopted guidelines to identify individuals and entities whose financial assets should be transferred to the Development Fund for Iraq. On 26 June, a first list of respective individuals was adopted by the Committee and on 21 November a list of respective entities followed.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all members of the Committee and in particular to OIP under its Executive Director, Benon Sevan, and to the Secretariat's sanctions branch for Iraq, headed by Mr. Wan, for their close and amicable cooperation. Without their support and commitment, we would not have been able to close this chapter of United Nations activities in this manner. While the importance of the oil-for-food programme for the survival of the Iraqi people has been highlighted repeatedly in the last few weeks, a final assessment of the sanctions against the former Iraqi regime still needs to be written. Such an assessment will have to weigh the proportionality between duration and effects, and between the effects of the imposed sanctions on the Iraqi people and the political effects on the regime of Saddam Hussein and the region.

Such an assessment could provide some answers to questions of general importance relating to sanction regimes, such as the regime imposed against Saddam Hussein, but also others. The questions are: did the sanctions achieve their goals and was it justified to continue applying them over such a long period of time, without principal reassessment by the Security Council? I am convinced there would be merit in examining such questions in order to keep the instrument of sanctions sharp, efficient and justified and an important tool in the arsenal of the Security Council.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I will now make a statement in my capacity as Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia.

Since 1 January 2002, the Committee has held sixteen meetings. As Chairman, I made verbal reports on the work of the Committee to the Missions and to the press after each formal meeting. I do not intend to describe in detail the work of the Committee. The annual report for the year 2002 was issued in document S/2002/1430. This year's report will be issued in a few days. I would like to make a few brief comments that could help the next Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia and the work of the Committee in general.

First, on more general matters that illustrate the difficulties encountered, Somalia is possibly the only State subject to sanctions that does not really have a central Government. There has been a civil war raging for over 12 years. The two reports of the Panel of Experts on Somalia described systematic violations of the arms embargo that was imposed on 23 January 1992, pursuant to Security Council resolution 732 (1992).

For over 12 years, the heads of the Somali factions have flouted the resolutions that were adopted, which challenges the very credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations. It is clear that a new process must be employed. In addition, the complex situation in Somalia and the regional repercussions of the Somalian crisis demand a comprehensive and integrated approach with respect to the arms embargo and also with respect to the consequences of that embargo which spill over the borders of the country and are connected to the insecurity in the region, organized crime and international terrorism. A united approach in the Council and much more effort are both needed to confront this challenge to the international community. We need better coordination of the efforts of the Committee and those of international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as those of Member State and non-State actors.

Consensus and resolve in the Council are crucial in ending the atmosphere of impunity that has existed

for far too long. There is therefore a need to act firmly and effectively to make up for lost time and broaden the sanctions regime. Naturally, active cooperation and wholehearted support by all Member States of the United Nations is essential. I would stress, in particular, the responsibility of the front-line States and neighbouring States.

My second comment relates to the interdependence of two aspects of the situation in Somalia: the political aspect dealt with by the Council, and the sanctions aspect. The approval I used as Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia, which was supported by all members of the Committee, was that we should look at the situation in terms of the link between the implementation of the arms embargo and the political process in Somalia. The arms embargo is not a goal in itself, it is simply a tool used to generate the necessary conditions for promoting Somali national reconciliation. Accordingly, at this critical moment in the Somali peace process, it is essential to continue efforts to ensure harmony between the two aspects of the situation, while respecting the different specific nature of the two tasks.

One of the most important measures taken by the Security Council, which gave new dynamism to the work of the Committee, was the creation of the Panel of Experts pursuant to Security Council resolution 1425 (2002). For over ten years, the Committee has been faced with problem that it did not have enough resources to deal systematically with information about arms embargo violations. The Committee needed the necessary resources to do its work. The Security Council decision enabled the Committee to obtain regular, detailed information about violations of the arms embargo and to work on recommendations to strengthen the embargo.

The establishment of the first Panel of Experts was, in itself, a clear message to all of those who violate the sanctions regime. It also bore witness to the Council's resolve to ensure strict respect for the embargo. The work of the two Panels of Experts and their presence in the region showed that they operated as a deterrent to those who might violate the sanctions imposed by the Council.

I would like to take the opportunity to reiterate my thanks to the experts who were members of the Panel for their excellent and professional work. In the last two years, an important aspect of the Committee's work was its visit to the area, which I had the honour to lead. The Committee's mission was to convey a clear message, namely, that the Council was resolved to ensure full respect for the arms embargo and that violations would not be tolerated.

We spoke with leaders of neighbouring States and front-line States, and leaders of regional and subregional organizations, namely the League of Arab States and the African Union, and we stressed the need to find practical steps that could be taken to enhance the effectiveness of the arms embargo. The Committee's visit to the region, which was quite unprecedented in terms of its membership and objectives, led us to formulate our observations and to draw up nine recommendations to strengthen the sanctions regime. I am glad that the most recent resolution adopted a few days ago by the Council on Somalia included the main recommendations of the mission. The mission was able to have direct contact with Governments of countries involved, with a view to strengthening cooperation with Member States and regional and subregional organizations.

One of the conclusions of the Committee that the Council should follow up on was the lack of technical capacity in States in the region to monitor their air space and land and sea borders. Material and technical assistance should therefore be provided by the community of donors to those States to strengthen their national and regional capacities to monitor the main ports, airports and border crossing points.

It is essential that neighbouring States of Somalia be encouraged to develop bilateral and subregional links, so that they can act together to avert violations of the arms embargo. I hope the Committee will continue to cooperate with the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), so as to develop some of the initiatives that are designed to ensure ongoing dialogue and respect for the arms embargo and reliable monitoring of the borders.

In my view, information from countries with significant intelligence gathering resources deployed along the Horn of Africa could be extremely useful to the Committee. There have been some problems between the Council and the countries in question and I believe efforts must be made to resolve them.

In conclusion, I would very warmly like to thank the Secretariat for its support to the Committee in the course of its recent work, particularly Mr. Gregor Boventer, Secretary of the Committee; Ms. Loraine Rickard-Martin, former Secretary of the Committee; Ms. Anna Frangipani-Campino; and Ms. Seok Hoon Bodek.

As we are preparing to leave the Council and the Committee, we encourage them to continue to work with the same energy and commitment. I also wish to pay tribute to all delegations for their support and the proactive approach they have taken over the years. In particular I note the support extended to me by my Vice-Chairmen, namely, Mexico, Norway and Germany.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

I now call on Mr. Fayssal Mekdad, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 918 (1994), concerning Rwanda.

Mr. Mekdad (*spoke in Arabic*): As we are soon to leave the Security Council as an elected member of this important international body, it is my pleasure to address the issue of Rwanda, an African country with which the international community stood shoulder to shoulder in order to return to it peace, stability and security.

In speaking about Rwanda, it is necessary to mention the Security Council's visit to the countries of Central Africa several months ago. Through that mission we were able to witness events on the ground, to meet the different parties and to witness the plight of the peoples of Rwanda and the other African countries we visited, as well as to learn about their hopes and aspirations.

I should like at this meeting to convey to the Security Council the fact that the sanctions Committee on Rwanda, which was created by resolution 918 (1994) did not hold formal meetings this year. That was not due to a lack of desire on the part of the Committee's Bureau to face any violations of resolution 918 (1994). Instead, the reason was due to the fact that the Committee did not receive any information on violations of the resolution. The fact that we received no complaints of possible violations does not necessarily mean that no weapons reached Rwanda illegally. However, it does illustrate the international community's increasing awareness of the need to avoid any violations of the resolution, as that would have dire repercussions for the situation in both Rwanda and the Central African region in general.

I would, however, like to emphasize that, in the absence of a specific monitoring mechanism for the effective implementation of the weapons embargo, the Committee reiterates its previous comments stressing the fact that it depends upon the cooperation of States and organizations having any information concerning potential or real violations of the arms embargo. Once again I underscore the fact that the Committee received no such indications or specific allegations of violations last year. I should also like to add that, following the Security Council's adoption of resolution 918 (1994) imposing sanctions on Rwanda and the creation of a committee to monitor implementation, another resolution (1011 (1995)) was adopted lifting the sanctions against the Government of Rwanda while maintaining the embargo on non-governmental actors.

Central Africa in general, and Rwanda in particular, are experiencing clear progress towards stability and security. We believe that that should draw the appropriate attention and concern from the Security Council in the future. I would also add that all aspects of weapons smuggling to this important region of the world, including Rwanda, must be stopped immediately. There is no justification whatever for tolerating such smuggling, the repercussions of which are always dire.

In that regard, allow me to pay tribute to the complete cooperation that existed between Syria's chairmanship of the Committee and the Security Council secretariat. I should also like to thank the Vice-Chairmen from Guinea and Spain for their efforts in helping us to keep up with all the developments pertaining to the implementation of resolutions 918 (1994) and 1011 (1995). I would also like to thank the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations for its full cooperation with the Committee. I also express my best wishes to the people and the Government of Rwanda in overcoming all the difficulties they have faced. We wish them every success in rebuilding their country, as well as development and well-being in Rwanda.

In this last statement, I should like to wish every success to the members of the Council, permanent and

non-permanent alike, with whom we have cooperated sincerely in addressing the challenges of our world, particularly in eliminating the sources of tension that continue to threaten international peace and security. I also wish every success to our colleagues in the delegations that will begin their service in the Security Council in the new year. All the members of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic, and I personally, would like to convey our best wishes for the coming holidays and new year to all members and observers.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mrs. María Angélica Arce de Jeannet, who will speak on behalf of the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997), concerning Sierra Leone.

Mrs. Arce de Jeannet (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express Mexico's appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having kept up, through the holding of this public meeting, the Security Council's practice, begun in December 2002, of allowing non-permanent members whose mandate ends in December an opportunity to share their experiences at the head of a subsidiary body.

In the case of Mexico, the chairmanship of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997), concerning Sierra Leone — a position we have held since January 2002 — presented us with very interesting challenges. First, we had to put our full effort behind fulfilling the mandate entrusted to the sanctions Committee, guiding the deliberations and proposing ways of ensuring the full implementation of the Security Council's resolutions.

Secondly — and this is perhaps the part from which we benefited the most as a country and as a delegation — we had an opportunity to discover and delve into a geographic problem that was initially foreign to us. However, the dynamism of the members of the Committee and the state of the political process in Sierra Leone motivated us to learn and, subsequently, to manage more smoothly the various elements that are part of the reality of that country, including the regional dimension.

In the Committee we were able from the beginning to adopt the guidelines that set the course for our work. The commitment of some members of the Committee during the past two years, in addition to the invaluable cooperation of the Government of Sierra Leone, have been key to carrying out our work. We followed to the letter one of the pieces of advice also received by other sanctions committee Chairmen, namely, to make working visits to a country and its neighbours involved in a sanctions regime. The Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, headed the mission that in late June and early July 2002 travelled to Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, Belgium, France and Austria. I wish once again to convey Mexico's appreciation to the United Nations Department of Political Affairs for its support during the mission.

Exchanges of views with various governmental and non-governmental actors and regional and international organizations were key to our progress on the issues of compliance with the arms and diamond embargoes and the use of the travel-ban list. During the mission, we also addressed obstacles to the practical implementation of Security Council sanctions, as well as criteria for lifting those sanctions.

One side effect of our first-hand experience of the prevailing situation in the West African countries visited during the mission was Mexico's decision to promote the constructive involvement of the Security Council on Liberia and the issuance of a statement of the President of the Council in December 2002.

Of satisfaction to the Mexican chairmanship of the 1132 (1997) Committee was the lifting in June 2003 of the diamond embargo in Sierra Leone, following a detailed consideration by members of the Committee of the actions taken by the Government of that country to establish a certification of origin system for diamonds and additional administrative measures to exercise control over diamond-mining areas and to regulate that sector.

With respect to arms embargoes, the Committee took into account the views of the Government of Sierra Leone on maintaining the embargo as a measure to consolidate the peace process and regional security. Similarly, the travel-ban list was updated by removing the names of individuals who had died and by adjusting the data in the database accordingly.

One innovative aspect of the work of the sanctions Committee was Mexico's initiative to hold informal tripartite meetings among the 1132 (1997) Committee on Sierra Leone, the 1343 (2001) Committee on Liberia and the 864 (1993) Committee on sanctions against UNITA in Angola, coordinated by

Mexico, so that we might have an exchange of views on questions related to the diamonds embargoes, the arms embargoes and the travel-ban list within the respective mandates of those Committees.

In addition to reviewing various questions related to those issues, we, the members of the three Committees, had the opportunity to receive a visit from a diamonds expert, who gave us his opinion on the best way to make diamonds embargoes more effective.

We hope that this experience can be used by the Chairmen of the Sierra Leone and Liberia sanctions Committees in 2004, given the regional approach that is required to address the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, the use of mercenaries, and the similarities in the management of the travel-ban lists.

I wish to point out that the members of the 1132 (1997) Committee will also need to include, as one of the pending tasks for 2004, the consideration and definition of the new legal basis for the sanctions regime in Sierra Leone, given the changes that have taken place in Liberia, the transformation of the Revolutionary United Front into a political party in Sierra Leone, the stable situation and the gradual withdrawal of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. This exercise has already been carried out by the Security Council in relation to the sanctions regime in Liberia.

We hope that Mexico's contribution in the leadership of the 1132 (1997) Committee can be furthered and broadened by the member of the Security Council that will assume those functions in January 2004. In conclusion, the delegation of Mexico thanks the Vice-Chairmen and all the members of the Committee; our colleagues in the Security Council Affairs Division; Joseph Stephanides, Steven Avedon, Loraine Rickard-Martin, James Sutterlin, Vicky Aquino and Armie Decepida for their constant support over the past two years for the work of the Committee.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, Chairman of the Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (spoke in French): It is a real pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over this last public meeting of the year and the last of Bulgaria's and Cameroon's terms on the Security Council. I thank you for convening this meeting so that we can convey our impressions and testimony as we complete not only our chairmanships of the Council's committees and working groups, but also our memberships of the Council itself.

As members know, the Council asked me to follow Ambassador Chowdhury of Bangladesh as Chairman of the informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions. The Council established the Working Group in 2000 so that it could offer general recommendations on the broader issue of sanctions, their administration in particular.

The coercive measures provided for in Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations — more commonly known as sanctions — are a powerful instrument in the hands of the Security Council that helps it to discharge its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. They are a powerful and valuable tool for modifying the behaviour of a State, entity or individuals that threaten to breach or have already breached international peace and security. The Council expects the Working Group to provide recommendations on ways and means of designing and implementing that tool with greater effectiveness, fairness and transparency.

Over the past two years, various issues have preoccupied the Working Group. I shall cite but a few. How can we enable States suffering the unwanted effects of sanctions to have access to the sanctions Committees? What assistance can be provided to third States affected by the application of sanctions? How long should sanctions last? What role can the Secretariat play in monitoring and implementing sanctions?

While working on the basis of the principle that there can be no agreement until there is agreement on everything, our Working Group was able nevertheless to agree provisionally on a number of points that I have elaborated in my report to the Council. Without going into detail, I would say that these agreements touch on the access of Member States to the sanctions Committees; measures to establish arrangements for monitoring sanctions in order to identify and investigate sources and methods of sanctions violations; and evaluating sanctions regimes.

I am happy to say that some of the recommendations agreed to by the Working Group are now being applied by the Council and its subsidiary bodies. I wish to welcome the appreciated contribution

to our work by the Interlaken, Bonn-Berlin and Stockholm processes.

Despite the progress made, there remains much to be done. Differences remain on two points that are closely interlinked: the duration of sanctions and conditions for their lifting. I believe, however, that the Security Council in its wisdom will be able to find common ground on those issues. There are, indeed, some elements on which all of the Council members are in agreement. We all agree that sanctions imposed by the Council must remain in force until their objective — the desired change in the behaviour, actions or policies of the subject of the sanctions — has been attained. Sanctions are an extraordinary instrument, and that extraordinary character, we believe, must be reflected in the decision to resort to them, as well as in respect of their duration. That is why it is always necessary to clearly define the objectives in the resolutions that impose them and to assess them regularly.

If they are initially based on the gravity and the evidence of a threat to or breach of international peace and security, the decision to lift them must not be taken lightly. Such a decision must take into account the diversity of situations.

Therefore, it is possible to compromise on the pending issues and, indeed, this compromise is within our grasp. Since we agree on the objectives sought and the way to achieve them, why not move beyond the slight differences we have on how to manage the time aspect of sanctions that we agree to impose. The question must be asked because sanctions today have become more complex and varied. They strike not only at States, but also at certain nationals and entities of those States. Other sanctions are more global in scope and address new threats to world peace, particularly terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

This is the last meeting that Cameroon will be attending as a member of the Council. I wish to take this opportunity to express to all Council members and members of the Secretariat our gratitude for their welcome and support. They have confirmed my country's belief that the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, is an irreplaceable forum for dialogue — a barrier, a rampart for the world.

I am almost tempted to say that the Security Council alone often holds the key to certain crucial moments in the history of humanity. Without its wisdom, experience and determination promote security and peace, might would be right in many parts of our world. The calling of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, is to ensure that together, all Member States contribute actively to achieving peace every day.

The world's future will be what the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, makes or does not make of it.

Cameroon has been able to gauge the priority given in the work and deliberations of the Security Council in the search for solutions and responses to the dangers that threaten Africa. On 22 October 2002, the Council held a public meeting on Central Africa, which was particularly meaningful. The commitments made at that time were very encouraging to the Central Africa region, made up of the Economic Community of Central African States. These commitments showed clearly that the Security Council and the members of United Nations stand firmly alongside the peoples of the United Nations who are in Central Africa.

We hope that the Council, in full tranquillity, objectivity and impartiality, will continue to study in depth new and creative ideas collected by the Secretariat mission that met in Central Africa. We are thinking particularly of the almost unanimous request for a standing presence in Central Africa of a special representative of the Secretary-General. That would help strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and the Economic Community of Central African States in the area of the maintenance of peace and security. It would help in the implementation of this integrated approach to issues of peace and development, which we urgently call for.

In a few days, we will celebrate Christmas and the advent of a new year, a time for good wishes. May the Prince of Peace bring to each and every one of us peace – peace within us, peace in our families, peace within our States, peace between our States, peace in the world; peace, the fruit of our solidarity, the solidarity of our united efforts and energy. Let us not forget that peace in the world will look like us. It will be you. It will be me. It will be us. It will be every one of us.

May the year 2004 be a time of reconciliation among men; a time of rediscovered harmony between nations; a time when swords are turned into

ploughshares, when the clash of arms is replaced by songs of peace. May the year 2004 be for each and every one of us a year of hope, a year of dreams come true.

The President (spoke in French): I thank Mr. Belinga-Eboutou for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.